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AUTHOR(S):

ZARCON, Thierry

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**Anthropology of Tariqa Rituals:
About the Initiatic Belt (*Shadd, Kamar*) in the Reception Ceremony**

Thierry ZARCON*

My purpose here, in order to fit with the topic of this issue — *Rethinking tariqa. What makes something tariqa?* — is an attempt to question the rituals of the *tariqa* and particularly to determine if the characteristics of these rituals could help us in understanding what makes something a *tariqa*. But, first of all, we need to answer the question ‘What are the Sufi rituals?’, and precisely, what is the reception / initiation ritual which is the most important ritual among many others, food rituals, seclusion (*khalwat*) rituals, invocation (*dhikr*) rituals, dance rituals, and so on, since the reception ritual *makes* a man a member of a *tariqa*.

In general, the presentation of the reception ceremony in Sufism by scholars specialized only in Arabic Sufism, is reductionist for, according to them, the reception ceremony in Sufism is comprised of three rituals only, although sometimes these are combined: i.e. the spiritual pact, usually a ritual taking of the hand of the Shaykh (‘*ahd, bay’a, mubāya’a*’), the transmission of the *dhikr* (*talqīn al-dhikr*) and the transmission of the cloak (*khirqa*), and sometimes also of the turban or headgear (*tāḥ*) [Chodkiewicz 2003: 80]. This wrong evaluation comes from an ignorance of the Sufi ceremonial rites in the Turko-persian area. Actually, in this region, the question of the reception ceremony is more complicated than in the Middle-East, since these three rituals were mingled over time with two other rituals sometimes considered prior in importance to them, i.e. the girding on the belt and the shaving of the head. Besides, regarding the anthropological characteristics of these rituals, let us remark that two of them are *symbolic gestures* (the handshake and the shaving the head), one is an *ascetic exercise* (the *dhikr*), and two are related to *sacred clothing* (the cloak, the headgear, and the belt).

My point here is to investigate the role played by the girding on the belt (*shadd / šedd; kamar / kemer*) in the reception ceremony in Turkic and Persian Sufism, particularly in the Persian Khaksariyya, in the Turkish Bektaşīye and Mevlevīye, and in the guilds of the Ottoman craftsmen (*esnaf, lonca*). My approach is both synchronically, i.e. through the history of this ritual, and diachronically. It concerns the 20th century and the present period. Besides, mention should be made that some Sufi lineages in the Turco-Persian area, like the Şaziliye, the Halvetiye, and the Nakşibendiye, never respected the custom of the initiatic belt, as it was in general found in the Rīfā‘īye and in the Kadiriye, although this ritual was exceptionally introduced in some Ottoman branches of these two last lineages, a point to be examined in the third section of this article.

1. The initiatic belt in the Futuvva and in the guilds of craftsmen

The ritual of girding on the belt (*šedd*) around the waist of a candidate comes from the Futuvva movement, a chivalrous and mystic heterogeneous sodality strongly influenced by Sufism (especially

* CNRS - Paris.

by the Malâmatiyya) in 10th-11th century.¹⁾ There are at least two hypothesis for the origin of this belt; either it could have come from the sacred girdle of the Zoroastrians [Gölpınarlı 1949-50: 83-85], or it has emerged in a genuine Muslim milieu, since instead of a belt or girdle we can find initiatic trousers, breeches, or strap. This belt was usually a strip of leather or cloth to be fastened round the waist. Rather than to be held together by a buckle, the belt is knotted and every knot bears a symbolic signification. According to some Futuvva books, other rituals were associated with the binding of the belt, i.e. the drinking of salted water (*shrub*) and other rituals coming from Sufism, the giving of the cloak (*hurka*), the donning of the headgear (*tâc*), and the shaving of the head. There are several significations for this belt. According to Algar, the “first initiatic belt was that which Adam girded on at the behest of Gabriel as a token of fidelity to his terrestrial mission as divine vice-regent [Algar 1998].” But this practice alludes also to the Quran (37: 101-111) when Abraham tied the legs of his son Ismail to sacrifice him. Here the belt is a symbol of self-sacrifice, and in a Futuvva manual of the 19th century the belt refers to the famous Hadith, “to die before death,” and alludes to the fighting against the satanic side of the self and to the liberation from any doubt about the religion.²⁾ In this manual, the *şedd*, actually a piece a cloth and not a belt or a girdle, is folded width-wise in five, then folded lengthwise in three and at the end in the form of a square. Particular significations are attributed to all these gestures: the number five hints at the five prayers in Islam, the five prophets and the five obligations of this religion. Three hints to the three paths of the *şer‘iat*, the *tarikât* and the *hakikat*. The number four (the square) hints to the four corners of the world, the four spiritual masters, the fourth caliphs and the fourth holy books (the Gospel, the Torah, the Quran, and the Book of Psalms) [Arslanoğlu 1997: 34-40].

It is likely that it was through the Anatolian Ahi movement (14th-15th c.), a combination of Sufism and Futuvva, to which the name of Ahi Evren is associated, that the tradition of the belt was introduced in several Turkish Sufi lineages and in the guilds of craftsmen. This custom has survived in all these trends after the disappearance of the Futuvva and of the Ahis in 15th-16th century. Particularly, the Ahis left a strong imprint on the guild of the tanners, based at Kırşehir, who were still active at the end of the 19th century and in close relations with Sufi lineages, as we will see below [Nuri 1922: 524-531; Cavit 1929: 3-7; Taeschner 1955: 71 sq.; Bayram 1991].

Several terms and expressions were used for the ritual of girding on the belt in the Sufi orders and guilds: *şedd kuşatmak* and *bel bağlamak* in Turkish, *kamar bastan*, *miyân bastan* in Persian. The ritual belt bears several names: *şedd*, *fita* and *peştimal* in the Ottoman guilds; *lung* or *kamar*, *pâlhang* in the Khaksariyya and the Qalandariyya; *tiğbend* (sword-belt), *kemer*, *makram*, *kanberiyê*, and *lunk* (for *lung*) in the Bektâşiye; *elif-i nemed* in the Mevleviye; *şedd* in the Rîfâ‘iye and the Kadiriye; *qamarbandî* among the Islamized shamans of Central Asia.

The oldest description of the belt ritual in the guild ceremony is given by Evliya Çelebî (mid-17th century). The master girded on the belt (*şedd*)³⁾ of the apprentice, a ceremony which was

1) For a more general presentation of the Futuvva, see [Gölpınarlı 1949-50].

2) [Arslanoğlu 1997: 57]. This hadith is quoted in another text about the *şedd* of the Futuvva in the beginning of the 20th century, [Yahyâ b. Sâlih el-İslâmbolî 2006: 167].

3) Among the guilds we find the terms *şedd* and *peştimal*, also *fita*.

followed by a pact (*biat*) [*Evliyâ Çelebi Seyâhatnâmesi* 1896-1897: 495-499]. Several documents are available about the social organisation of the guilds in 19th century, although the details about the ritual are quite poor. According to Raymond [Raymond 1998: 173-174], the custom of the *şedd* is attested from the 16th to the 19th century in the Arab lands of the Near East but absent in the Maghrib. Nevertheless one source points to a *şedd* ceremony in a Moroccan guild at the end of the 19th century.⁴⁾

Let us quote two examples of the belt ritual in the Turkish guilds, a few decades before it was banned by the Young Turks government and the Republic. At the beginning of the 20th century, in Ankara, there were two ceremonies called *şedd kuşatmak*, the first for a *çırak* (apprentice) to become a *kalfa* (qualified apprentice or assistant master), and the second, for a *kalfa* to be promoted as *ustad* (master). The master in chief of all the guild was the *ahibaba*, based at Kırşehir; he was actually the head of the mother lodge of the guild of the tanners.⁵⁾ Although the belt was the main element in this ritual, several versions of this ritual existed according to the craft where it was operated. Thus, in a second example which regards the guild of the tanners at Muğla (south-west of Turkey), in 1929, we learn that the new member (*çırak*) had to go through a preliminary stage of 1001 days,⁶⁾ before being girded with a *peştemal* and becoming a master in the craft (*usta*). At this time, the man in charge of the girding ceremony was a “Naqshbandî sufi” coming from Kırşehir [Cavit 1929: 3-7]. It is likely that this shaykh, instead of being a Naqshbandî, was actually a representative of the mother lodge of the guild of the tanners located in this city.

To conclude this section, it is worth noting that the Futuvva has been influential, directly or indirectly through Sufism, on Central Asian Islamized shamanism, for the initiatic belt has been introduced into its reception ritual [Centlives-Dumont 1988: 162; Garrone 2000: 110, 113-115, 248]. Actually, Shamanism has embodied an important diversity of practices and the initiatic belt is one of them. There is one example where the belt is knotted, like in the Futuvva, but the meaning of these knots refers to the spirits (*jinn*) who will help the shaman [Garrone, 2000: 115]. So, the belt ritual was reinterpreted according to the purposes of the shamans, that is to heal with the help of the spirits.

From the above, it may have become clear that in the Turko-Persian area, the initiatic belt of the Futuvva was incorporated into the major spiritual trends, i.e. the Sufi brotherhoods, the guilds of craftsmen, and even Islamized Shamanism. We may infer from this that the ethic of the Futuvva was strong enough in this region to permeate the whole of its social, professional and religious activities. The meaning of the belt was then adapted to these different trends but without losing its first chivalric and mystical mark apart from in Islamized Shamanism.

2. The belt of the Sufis

4) The new member is given the cloak (*hırka*) and then, the shaykh “lui ceindra aux reins la ceinture et l’initiera à la science,” [Mercier 1869: 434].

5) [Baha Said Bey 1925, 2000: 62-63, 66-67]. On the last state of the Turkish guilds in Istanbul see also [Nuri 1922].

6) This stage of 1001 days is not limited to this particular guild but mentioned in some other guilds; [Dalsar 1960: 120 ff].

The belt of the Futuvva was introduced in the ceremonials of some particular Persian and Turkish Sufi lineages. The common element of these lineages, namely the Qalandariyya, the Khaksariyya and the Bektāṣiye, being the lack of a full observation of the obligations of Islam, contrary to other lineages, e.g. the Naqshbandiyya. There is for example a chapter dedicated to the initiatic belt (*kamar*) in a Central Asian treatise on the Qalandariyya, a Sufi lineage renowned for its heterodoxy.⁷⁾ This chapter contains a list of all the prophets and saints who were given the belt,⁸⁾ and indicates that the belt have seven bonds or knots (*band*), each of them comprising four *maqam*: the seven knots are: the Islamic law (*sharī'a*), the spiritual path (*tarīqa*), the Truth (*haqīqa*), the prophethood (*nubuvva*), the intercession (*shafā'at*), love (*ashq*), and poverty (*faqr*).⁹⁾ In his travelogue ("Safarnāma," 18th c.), the East Turkestani Qalandar and poet Muhammad Dhalili / Zalili writes that he wore a *jānda* (*janda*), the term for cloak (*khirqā*), and that he girded himself with a belt (*jāndāni kiydim, kāmār baghladim*) [*Zālili Divani* 1985: 620]. Besides, it is of interest to note that in Central Asia, the Qalandariyya was closely associated with some branches of the Naqshbandiyya, and that the belt, as a sacred object and not as a ritual, may have been adopted by the second lineage. For instance, I found such a belt in the belonging of a Naqshbandī Sufī, Akhūnjān Ishān, living in Kashghar in 1998;¹⁰⁾ the belt belong to his grandfather, Tāhir Khān Khwāja (d. 1947), who was initiated into the Naqshbandiyya at Bukhara at the end of 19th century. I was told by Akhūnjān Ishān who was, up to his death in 2000, the head of a branch of the Naqshbandiyya-Jahriyya in Kashgar, that the two major symbols of legitimacy in this lineage were the headgear (*tāj*) and the belt (*kamar*).¹¹⁾ It might be said that his *kamar* was a remnant of the belt ritual used among the Central Asian Qalandars.¹²⁾ However, one of the famous masters in the Naqshbandī silsila, Abū'l-Hasan Kharāqānī (d. 1033), who is credited with the writing of a treatise on Sufi rituals, gave a description of the belt ritual and of the other main reception rituals, namely the shaving the hair of the head with scissors (*maqrāz*), the transmission of the cloak (*khirqā*) and of the headgear (*kulāh*).¹³⁾

In the Persian Khaksariyya lineage, the equivalent of the initiatic belt is the *lung* (loin-cloth, waist-cloth) and/or the *kafan* (shroud). There are some poems read to the candidate which provide explanations about this ritual of girding on the *lung*.¹⁴⁾ In Bektashism, a lineage very close to the Khaksariyya, the initiatic belt is called *tiğbend* (sword belt), and is habitually a rope made of rams' wool. In the course of the ceremony of reception, the rope is used several times. First and foremost, the initiator places the *tiğbend* around the neck of the candidate (*talib*) ("*tiğbendi talebin boynuna takīb*"). Then, taking in his right hand the right hand of the candidate and together holding the ends of

7) "Risāla-yi Qalandarān," f° 18-28.

8) "Risāla-yi Qalandarān," f° 18-23.

9) "Risāla-yi Qalandarān," f° 18-27.

10) Private Archives of Akhūnjān Ishān (d. 2000), Kashgar.

11) On this East Turkestani Naqshbandī lineage, see [Zarcone 2002: 536; 2008].

12) See a picture of this belt worn by a Bukhara dervische in [Frembgen 1999: 17].

13) "Risāla dar tarīq-i adhamiyya wa kulāh-i char-tarq:" facsimile of the Persian text of this manuscript (Süleymaniye Library, Istanbul, Yusuf Ağa Kit. 139/5) in [Ebu'l-Hasan Harakanī 2006: 53-63], with a translation in Turkish by M. Çiçekler (id., pp. 19-50).

14) [Böwering 1996: 153]. Mīrzā Muhammad 'Alī Sharīf Yazdī Shāhrūdī (document dated 1897-1899) in [Mīr-'Ābādīnī 1995: 272-273]. See also [Gramlich 1981: 84-88].

the *tiğbend* they make salutations (*niyaz*) to the threshold and enter the assembly hall of the Bektashi lodge. The last moment of the belt ritual happens towards the end of the ceremony when the initiator or the guide takes up the *tiğbend* and ties three knots in it accompanying the tying of each knot with a recitation of some *sura* of the Quran.¹⁵⁾ Finally, the initiator binds the *tiğbend* around the waist of the candidate (“*talebin tiğbendi kuşatıp*”)[Derviş Muhammed 2006: 69-70, 73-80, 90; Necib Âsim 1925: 17, 19; Birge (1937) 1965: 188, 191-193; Soygyer, 2005: 223-227]. There are some Bektashi poems (*tercüman*) which deals with this initiatic belt intended to be read to the candidate [Ahmet Rifat 1876: 289; Soygyer 2005: 265, 268]. In general, the candidate is bound in the *tiğbend* at the gallows of Mansûr al-Hallâj (Dar al-Mansur), a place in the Bektaşî reception hall (*meydan*) where he is symbolically hung, as it is illustrated in this poem of the female Bektaşî Remzi Bacı:

They reveal to me the secret of ‘dying [before death]’
 The night when I was brought to the gallows of Mansûr [el-Hallâj].
 ...
 A this very moment, my master (*pir*) takes my hand
 and girds the *tiğbend* around my waist (Remzi Bacı)¹⁶⁾
Mutu kable sırrın eyledi işşa
Mansur’un dârına durduğum gece
 ...
Ol saatte aldı Pîrim elimi
Bağladı tiğbendle benim belimi

There are many other Bektashi poems which allude to the belt ritual. It is not easy however to determine at which period they were composed. The following verse refers to a quite rare tradition according to which the belt is tied with forty knots.

There is on his waist a belt with forty knots.
Kırk düğümünden kuşağı var belinde (Veli Baba, epoch unknown) [Nüzhet 1930: 393]

And the verse below points to the first moment in the belt ritual when the *tiğbend* is placed around the neck of the candidate.

My guide tied my neck.
Rehberim boynuma bendetti bağı [Nüzhet 1930: 348]

Finally, something must be said of the Mevlevi order. In this Sufi lineage, the initiatic belt ritual is

15) All these knots have meaning, like in the Futuvva, see [Birge (1937) 1965: 192, footnote 3; Gölpinarlı 1949-50: 49-51].

16) [Özmen 1995: 147]. The belt alludes also to the acceptance of the gallows, see [Molé 1959: 138].

present in the ceremony although it is not as significant as in the Bektāṣiye order. The reason is that there is no ritual of girding on this belt around the waist of the Mevlevî dervish. The belt is no more than a remnant of the Futuvva. Esrâr Dede, a Mevlevî writer (d. 1796) mentions a rope called *elif nemed* (for it resembled the letter *alif*), fixed on the dress and confirms that this custom was borrowed from the Futuvva.¹⁷⁾ As is well known, Futuvva played a major role in Seljuk Anatolia at the time of Mevlana and of his son Sultan Veled who set up the brotherhood.

3. Anatolian syncretism: the initiatic belt in the Rîfâ'îye and in the Kadiriye

The Khaksariyya, Bektāṣiye and Mevleviye are genuine Turko-Persian lineages, contrary to the Rîfâ'îye and the Kadiriye which grew up among Arabs and never adopted the custom of the initiatic belt. However, in Anatolia, there are some branches of these two last lineages which have integrated this custom at least since the 16th century. Conversely, the Arab branches have favoured the cloak and headgear rituals only, as we can see from a manuscript on the Kadiriye at the beginning of the 19th century.¹⁸⁾ In one word, I would distinguish two cases of the merging of the Futuvva or of the Ahilik with either the Kadiriye or the Rîfâ'îye orders. The first case concerns the association of an Ottoman branch of the Kadiriye with the mother-lodge of the Ahi Evren tanners guild at Kırşehir. The second case points to the presence of several Futuvva doctrine and practices in some tekkes of the Rîfâ'îye order in Macedonia. In both cases, the initiatic belt has occupied an important place in the ceremonies conducted in these tekke, up to the beginning of the 20th century, as it is documented in several Kadirî and Rîfâ'î manuals, in manuscript and in print.

In 17th century, some Kadirî tekkes in Anatolia and in Albania were closely associated with the local guilds of the tanners (*debbağ*) and shared rituals with them. At Tosya (Central Anatolia), Tefsîrî Mevlâna Şeyh Mustafa (d. 1640-41), was both the shaykh of the Kadirî tekke (of the Ismailiye-Rumiye branch) of this city and the head (*ahibaba*) of the guild of the tanners in the place, directing the *dhikr* / *zikr* ceremonies, the dance and the *şedd* ritual [Haddâdî 1956: 246-250]. The mother lodge of this branch of the Kadiriye was the famous Kadirihane of Tophane (Istanbul). One of its shaykhs, Ahmed Muhyiddîn (d. 1909), authorized an abridged book of a well-known treatise of Futuvva.¹⁹⁾ His text points to several aspects of the belt ritual, precisely the ritual called “the seal of the belt” (*mühr-i şedd*). The *şedd*, described as a belt (*kuşak*), is tied with three knots. The Prophet spread out his cloak (*rida*) on the soil and folded it in the form of an *alif*. Then he said some prayers and put it around his neck. After that, he took it out and said that at the time of the Mirâj, Jabrâ'îl had girded on this belt (*kuşak*) around his waist and then brought him to God. Hence, the Prophet girded Ali with this belt. The signification of one of the knot alludes to the secret of *elif-lam-mim* (i.e. Allâh, Jabrâ'îl,

17) [Horata 1998: 45-46, 94-95, 104; Gölpinarlı 1977: 332]. Sometimes, the Bektāṣi belt is equated with the “*elif-lam*,” according to [Derviş Muhammed 2006: 73].

18) [Rîf'at el-Kâdirî 1822-23: ff° 32r and v]. On the Kadirî reception, see also [Brown 1868: 110-114].

19) Seyyid Muhammed ibn el-Seyyid Alâ al-Dîn al-Hüseynî al-Razavî, “Miftâhu'd-dekayik fî beyân il-fütüvveti ve'l-hakayik,” dated 1524. It is partly quoted in [Haddâdî 1956: 250-251]. A manuscript of this treatise was in the hands of Gavsî Erkmenkul, shaykh of the Kadirihane in 1956. On this treatise, see [Gölpinarlı 1949-50: 24-25]. On the other books on Futuvva existing in this lodge, see [Seyyid Sırrı Ali 1992: 267].

Muhammad).²⁰⁾ This is, I believe, a proof of the sympathy of the Kadiriye for the Futuvva and another confirmation of the mixing of the two trends, at least on paper, since there is no confirmation that the belt ritual was implemented in the Kadiri ceremonial at the Kadiri hane.

The association of the Kadiriye with the guild of the tanners also existed in Albania in the 18th century. It was the case of some “Kadirî-Ahi” tekke at Elbasan, Tirana and in the south of the country. For example, a Kadirî lodge situated at Tirana was called the “Tekke of the Tanners [Clayer 2000: 214-216].” The link between the Guild of the tanners at Kırşehir and the Kadirî lineage at Elbasan is demonstrated in a “Regulations for the corporations of the Tanners of the City of Elbasan”, dated 1657, written by el-Şeyh Seyyid Mustafa İhtiyar el-Kâdirî ibn Seyyid Süleymân Malatyalı, the head of the guild and a Kadirî dervish.²¹⁾ In this document, the name of Ahi Evren, the initiator of the Ahilik and of the guild of the tanners, is frequently quoted. More, Abdülkadir Geylânî (d. 1165-66), eponym of the Kadiriye, is credited with the revival of the Futuvva (*Şeyh seyyid ‘Abdülkâdir Geylânî tarîk-i fütüvvete revnak verdi ve ihyâ eyledi*) and also of the “tarikat” of Sultan Ahi Mahmud Evren (*Sultân Ahî Mahmûd Evrân’ın tarikatın ‘Abdülkâdir Geylânî ihyâ eylemiştir*) [“Regulations for the corporations of the Tanners of the City of Elbasan,” 7]. This affirmation is quite interesting and symbolic although it is historically wrong for Geylânî died one century before Ahi Mahmud Evren (d. 1262). What is striking here is the existence of two *silsila* to which this tekke traces its spiritual origin: the first *silsila* is called *silsila-i zerriye* (hereditary *silsila*) and the second, *silsila-i futuvvet* (*silsila* according to the Futuvva) [“Regulations”: 7]. It means that the for Futuvva and the Kadiriye to mingle they must have operated side by side in this tekke.

Also, according to these regulations, Ahi Evren has transmitted several sacred objects as symbols of legitimacy to his followers in both guilds and Sufi lodges, among which are the cloak of the dervishes, the belt or girdle and the crown (*tekbîr ile hırka ve küşâk ve tâc verirler...*) [“Regulations”: 7]. The belt ritual is transmitted according to a way which resembles the *tiğbend* ceremonial in Bektashism: a *makram* (Arabic, *mikrama*), actually a cloth used as an apron, is bound around the neck of the candidate (*boynuna makramsin takub...*) who will be girded later [“Regulations,” 1, 10]. Actually, the tekke of Elbasan, used to be a lodge of the Kadiriye and although its regulations have recognised Geylânî as a renovator of the Futuvva and of the Ahi guild, it clearly belonged to the guild of the tanners. Let us mention that the term “tekke” was used by the corporation of the tanners for the places of their meeting, like the sufis. Futuvva regulations used at Tosya and Elbasan are quite identical and are obviously two variants from a single model; this is also the case with the belt ritual [Haddâdî 1956: 247-249].

The influence of the Futuvva is also observable at a Rîfâ’î tekke situated at Üsküb / Skopje in

20) [Haddâdî et al. 1956: 250-251]. Similar traditions were collected by Yahyâ b. Sâlih el-İslâmbolî, a member of the Zenbûriye lineage which mingles Kadiriye and Nakşibendiye orders and the head of the Erdi Baba Dergah at Istanbul (Davudpaşa district). Many colour drawings of *kemer*, *şedd*, *elifi-nemed*, *kanberkiye*, *tiğ-bend*, *palhenk* are presented in his book, the “Mecmû’atü’z-Zarâif Sandûkatu’l-Ma’ârif” (1907): see [Atasoy 2000: 237-251; Yahyâ Âgâh b. Sâlih el-İstanbulî 2002: 137-157, 178-194; Yahyâ b. Sâlih el-İslâmbolî 2006: 121-135, 159-173].

21) We have only a copy of this regulation in the State Archives of Albania, Tirana, AQSh, F. 129, D. 9, fl. 7-8 (Ottoman Turkish). See a presentation of this document in [Clayer 2000: 214-216]. I would like here to record my special thanks to Nathalie Clayer for providing me with copies of this manuscript.

Macedonia, for one of its shaykhs, Muhammed el-Bâkir el-Rifâ'î el-Üskübî (d. 1896), authorised a manuscript intitled “Fütüvvetnâme-yi Rifâ'îyye” in 1906.²²⁾ In this document, we see that the *şedd* ritual is associated with the transmission of the cloak (*kırka*) and of the headgear (*tâc*) [“Fütüvvetnâme-yi Rifâ'îyye”: 12]. In this Rifâ'î tekke, the *şedd* appears in the investiture of a *halife*, i.e. a representative of the shaykh.²³⁾ This ritual resembles those analysed above since the *şedd* is put on the shoulders of the candidate [“Fütüvvetnâme-yi Rifâ'îyye”: 14-15]. A similar *şedd* ritual for *halife* is described in a manual on the practices of the Rifâ'îye intitled *Feyzul Sabah* written by Nihat Karakaş, a Sufi belonging to the same tekke. This book, printed in 1985, was based on several manuscripts conserved in the tekke.²⁴⁾ It indicates that the *şedd* was bound around the waist of the new *halife*, then it was divided into two sections and the ends of one section were tied to his neck [Feyzul Sabah 1985: 45]. However the *şedd* is present also in the reception ritual; it is placed around the neck of the candidate who is later brought to the *dar* and the *şedd* is then bound around his waist. It is knotted three times. The ceremonial is completed with the transmission of the headgear and of the cloak [Feyzul Sabah 1985: 33-35]. It is striking that this ritual is very close, not to say quite similar, to the belt ritual executed in the Kadiriye and in the Bektâşiye orders. We may suppose that all these rituals were borrowed from the guild of the tanners.

Surprisingly, we learn also that, according to the *Feyzul Sabah*, there are seven ways to gird on the *şedd*, one for each of the seven officers of the tekke, i.e. the *çavuş*, *alemdar*, *nakip*, *nücebba*, *halife*, *shaykh* (one name of an officer is missing) [Feyzul Sabah 1985: 116-118]. It is very likelihood that the presentation of the *şedd* in the *Feyzul Sabah* was modelled upon the “Fütüvvetnâme-yi Şeyh Yasin al-Rifâ'î”²⁵⁾ and by other *Fütüvvetnâme* written by Rifâ'î shaykhs. In one of these *Fütüvvetnâme* dated 1806, we find several illustrations of these *şedd*, all being quite similar to those drawn in the *Feyzul Sabah* [Gölpınarlı 1949-50: 71; Sarıkaya 2002: 166-170].

CONCLUSION

My conclusions can be summed up in a few words. The present article has attempted to provide a historical and anthropological framework for the analysis of the initiatic belt, a ritual originally cultivated in the Futuvva and among the craftsmen, which has become a major element in the reception ritual of some Turko-Persian Sufi lineages. History told us that the ethical rules and, more striking, several rituals of the Futuvva were still in use in these Sufi lineages up to the beginning of the 20th century. This fact was well known among lineages like such as the Bektâşiye,

22) This manuscript originally conserved in the Kadiriye of Istanbul, is now in the private library (Kyoto) of Prof Tonaga Yasushi's to whom I would like to record here my special gratitude for authorizing me to consult this document.

23) A whole chapter — “der beyân-i hilâfet-i rifâ'îye” — is dedicated to this ritual; “Fütüvvetnâme-yi Rifâ'îyye,” 14 sq.

24) [Feyzul Sabah. *Rufai Erkanı ve Evradı Şerifi* 1985]. This book was written at the time of Shaykh Mustafa Hazinedar (d. 1974). About these shaykhs of the Rifâ'î tekke of Üsküb Skopje, see [Feyzul Sabah 1985: 7-11], and [Masulovic-Marsol 1992: 42-48, 82].

25) Süleymaniye Library, Hacı Mahmud Kit., Ms 2532; see [Gölpınarlı 1949-50: 70-72] and [Sarıkaya 2002: 11, 144-145].

Mevleviye and Khaksariyya, although this needs further study, but rarely mentioned in the cases of lineages like the Kadirîyye and the Rîfâ'îye. There are two explanations for the transmission of the belt ritual to these Sufi orders. First, some lineages may have borrowed this ritual directly from the Futuvva and the Ahi organisation (Bektaşîye), and directly from the Futuvva in the case of the Persian Khaksariyya (or through the Qalandariyya). Second, other lineages (Kadirîye, Rîfâ'îye) have mingled with the Ottoman guild of the tanners (let us remark by way of parenthesis that the name of Ahi Evren, far from being known only among the Ottoman craftsmen, was also venerated in the guild manuals (*risale*) of some remote countries, like for example Afghanistan).²⁶⁾

Regarding the belt ritual, our historical researches suggest that there was no attempt to have a standardized belt ceremony, an action which would however have been impossible to do since the belt custom had spread throughout the whole of Asia and the Middle East. Moreover, following its introduction into some Sufi lineages, the *şedd* ritual found new significance (in relation with Sufism). In Sufi lineages, the belt was associated with the classic Sufi rituals of reception, *hurka*, *tâc*, etc. In addition, the belt has rarely totally replaced these rituals although the confusion between the *şedd* and the *hurka* was encouraged.

So, the reception ritual is worthwhile observing if we want to understand whether a certain organization works as a *tariqa*. Nevertheless it must be born in mind that almost all the reception rituals mentioned above, including the ritual of the belt, were also performed by mystical or gnostic trends, sometimes not Sufi, i.e. groups which are not strictly *tariqa*, and years before these rituals were integrated into the Sufi orders. So what makes the difference when these rituals passed from a pre-*tariqa* framework to a *tariqa*. Actually, the differences lie, I believe, in the fact that these rituals, when adopted by the *tariqa*, were in general integrated in a wider ceremony, a ceremony to be understood here as a set of rituals defined and presented in a clear and ordered way, i.e. codified, and under the strict supervision of Sufi monitors, shaykhs, *khalîfa*, etc.

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26) See [Centlivres-Demont 1997].

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